

In the Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A gathering and picking device ~~with, comprising:~~
a gathering element, which is rotated about an approximately vertical
rotational axis that and is arranged to grasp plant stalks;
~~and to transport the plant stalks along a picking gap of a picking device, the a~~
picking gap having an effective length, wherein the plant stalks are transported along
the effective length of the picking gap by the gathering element; and
~~characterized by the fact that the picking gap is curved along the effective~~
length such that it has the effective length of the picking gap is an essentially
constant distance from the vertical rotational axis of the gathering element over its
effective length.

2. (Currently amended) The gathering and picking device as defined by
claim 1 wherein the gathering element is provided with fingers that extend radially
outward from the vertical rotational axis, wherein the fingers are oriented
substantially perpendicular to the effective length of the picking gap.

3. (Currently amended) The gathering and picking device as defined by
claim 2 wherein the picking gap has an end region outside the effective length,
wherein the end region is spaced a greater distance from the vertical rotational axis
of the gathering element by a greater distance than the remainder distance to the
effective length of the picking gap.

4. (Original) The gathering and picking device as defined by claim 1 wherein
a picking roll is arranged beneath the picking gap, the picking roll having an inlet
zone and the picking gap having an inlet region, the inlet zone of the picking roll is
situated beneath the inlet region of the picking gap.

5. (Original) The gathering and picking device as defined by claim 2 wherein
a picking roll is arranged beneath the picking gap, the picking roll having an inlet
zone and the picking gap having an inlet region, the inlet zone of the picking roll is
situated beneath the inlet region of the picking gap.

6. (Original) The gathering and picking device as defined by claim 3 wherein
a picking roll is arranged beneath the picking gap, the picking roll having an inlet
zone and the picking gap having an inlet region, the inlet zone of the picking roll is
situated beneath the inlet region of the picking gap.